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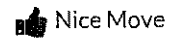
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# Is it Possible That There Is Something In Between Consensual Sex And Rape... And That It Happens To Almost Every Girl Out There?

hot piece of TSM 172 6 months



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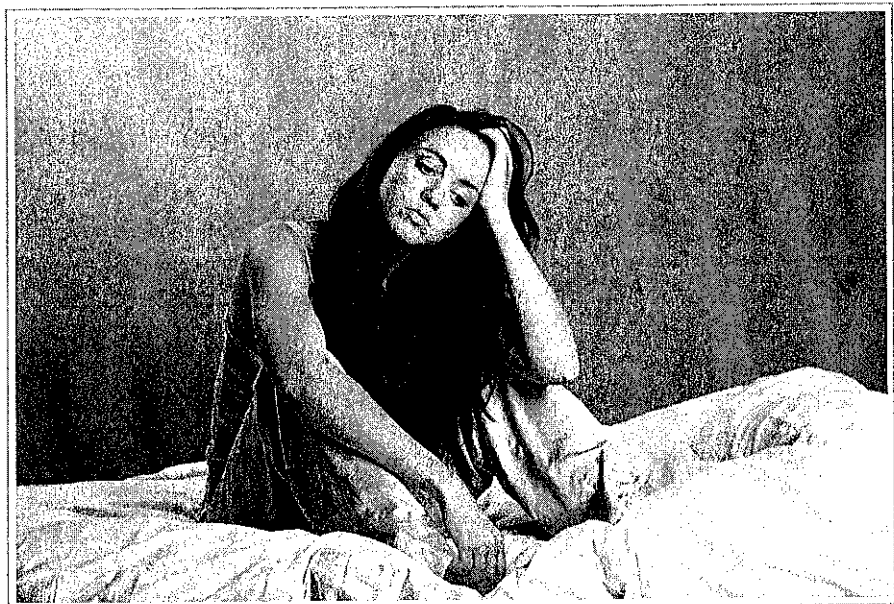
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I rolled out of bed around noon that day, in celebration of it being Saturday. After no fewer than 13 hours of drinking, I ended up at my friend Matt's house. I had been flirting with him all night—and arguably all of my college career.

He wasn't traditionally good-looking, but he was a notorious charmer with some serious bad boy in him that made him weirdly hot in a not-hot way. Even though we'd been strictly platonic since we met, I always felt a twinge of secret excitement when I had his attention, so when I found myself having a heart-to-heart with him in his bedroom, I felt a weird combination of emotions. Part of me felt as if I was 15 again. I was excited and nervous to be there. I was hyper aware of my body, and of his, wondering, maybe even hoping, he'd kiss me. Another part of me felt that this was wrong. Not in an "it's wrong, but it's hot and scandalous

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and I still want to do it" way—wrong as in not right, wrong as in uncomfortable. This was not a guy I wanted to get involved with. This was a guy who'd had anonymous girl after anonymous girl in and out of his bedroom since we were in the dorms. This was a guy with whom I'd had countless conversations about his inability to care about women, romantically. This was Matt. He interrupted my inner conflict with something that would have way more weight years later.

"I feel like you want me to make a move, just so you can turn me down," he said.

Before I even had a chance to decide if he was right, we were making out. In my state of extreme intoxication, my mind was racing in search of a decision. This was exciting. This was fun. But this was also really, really weird, and ultimately, not a road I wanted to go down. I couldn't decide if the excitement and lust in the air would win over the pit in my stomach. It wasn't until he grabbed a condom that I really knew how I felt. I was not okay with this. I did not want to have sex with him.

But I did.

He slid inside me and I didn't say a word. At the time, I didn't know why. Maybe I didn't want to feel like I'd led him on. Maybe I didn't want to disappoint him. Maybe I just didn't want to deal with the "let's do it, but no, we shouldn't" verbal tug-of-war that so often happens before sleeping with someone. It was easier to just do it. Besides, we were already in bed, and this is what people in bed do. I felt an obligation, a duty to go through with it. I felt guilty for not wanting to. I wasn't a virgin. I'd done this before. It shouldn't have been a big deal—it's *just sex*—so I didn't want to make it one.

I stared at the ceiling the whole time, occasionally flashing him the fake smile reserved for people you accidentally make eye contact with in the grocery store. I don't think I moved the entire time, and I didn't care if he noticed. I just wanted it to end, and I knew it wouldn't be long. I just had to suck it up for a few minutes, let him do his thing, and it would be over. When it finally was, he smiled at me, kissed my forehead, and asked how it was. As we cuddled, I realized that what we had done was no different to him than the sex he'd had with anyone else. Overnight, I convinced myself it was no different to me, either.

I woke up with an "oh shit" feeling that quickly turned into an "oh well." I didn't really feel I'd been violated, though part of me knew I had. I wasn't mad. I wasn't hurt. I didn't want vengeance. I didn't even feel weird around him soon after. I didn't feel much of anything. I certainly didn't feel like I'd been raped. But what had happened the night prior was not consensual sex, and I didn't like it. I wanted the flirting. I wanted the kissing. I wanted the sleepover. But I didn't want to go all the way. And that's very hard to explain to a man who is just as drunk as you are.

There is not a word for my experience. The fact that there's not a word for it makes us feel like it doesn't exist. Or maybe there's not a word for it because we're pretending it doesn't exist. But this weird place in between consensual sex and rape? It's there. It *does* exist. And it's happening all the time. As it turns out, almost every woman I spoke to had been there at some point or another:

"To be honest, it would have been awkward to say no, so I just did it."

"I don't feel like it was a huge deal. Sometimes you have to have lunch with girls you don't want to have lunch with, and sometimes you have to have sex with boys you don't want to have sex with. Maybe you're pissy about it right after, but it doesn't affect you long-term, you know?"

"He was really drunk. He had no way of knowing I didn't want it."

It happens to us with consistent hookups, first dates, boyfriends, and one-night stands alike. We have sex with guys, because sometimes it's just easier to do it than to have the argument about not doing it. But no one talks about it. Talking about it makes it a big deal. It makes us feel like we're whining. It makes us feel like we're being dramatic. And we don't want it to be dramatic. We don't feel entirely violated. It doesn't affect us forever. We just feel like we got the short end of the stick, and that sometimes, we have to do something we don't want to do, out of politeness or social obligation. So why bring it up? Why risk wrongfully tagging a guy with a serious, heavy label he doesn't deserve? And more importantly, why risk being wrongfully tagged as "the girl who cried rape," when we're not trying to say it was rape at all? We're saying we don't know what it was. We just didn't like it. But by refusing to acknowledge the existence of these rape-ish situations, we're continuing to subject ourselves to them indefinitely.

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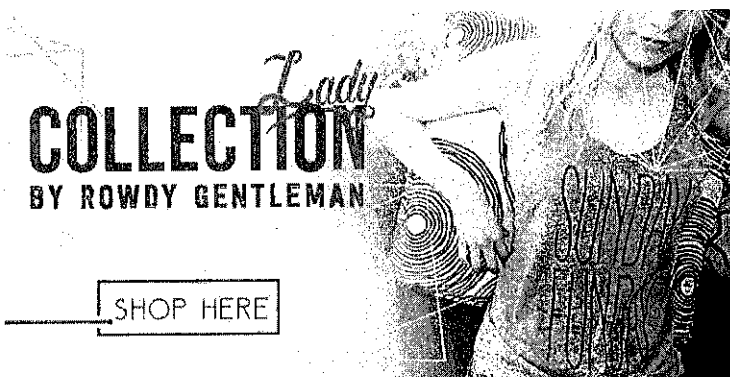
Nice Move



hot piece of TSM

Hot Piece (@VeronicaGrandex) is the Director of Total Sorority Move for Grandex, Inc. After having spent her undergraduate years drinking \$4 double LITs on a patio and drunk texting away potential suitors, she managed to graduate with an impressive GPA and an unimpressive engagement ring -- so unimpressive, in fact, some might say it's not there at all. Hot Piece has since been fulfilling her duties as "America's big," a title she gave to herself with the help of her giant ego. She has recently switched from vodka to wine on weekdays. Email her at [veronica@grandex.co](mailto:veronica@grandex.co)

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## COMMENTS

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Big

southerngirl2294 Thank you so much for writing this. I had something like this happen to me my freshman year, and a while later I started dating another guy. I eventually opened up to my boyfriend at the time about what had happened, explaining that I felt like I got raped, but at the same time I knew it wasn't RAPE. He accused me of being the "girl who cried wolf" and broke up with me then and there, and then proceeded to tell the guy that raped-but-didn't-rape-me-ldk that I was going around telling people that he raped me (which I wasn't, nobody knew that him and I had sex besides me, my big, and my later boyfriend). This is an issue that needs to somehow be addressed, because I know I'm not alone when I say that there's nights where I just break down and cry because I'm not sure how I'm supposed to feel about sleeping with this guy 3 years later.

229

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Staff

hot piece of TSM I'm sorry to hear that, and I definitely do think it's an issue. You're not alone. I'd really venture to say that most women have an experience like this. Maybe different details. But you didn't say no. And you're not mad at the guy, and don't want him to get in trouble. But it left you feeling uncomfortable. I think starting a dialogue is the first step, but I don't have any idea what the possible solution is.

133

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

Yonce I think the best solution is education on affirmative, enthusiastic consent. Understanding that consent to one thing means consent to ONLY that thing. Any time you want to escalate from one physical/sexual act to another (e.g. from getting in bed to having sex), then you need to ASK your partner. If your partner clearly wants to have sex as much as you do, they'll indicate it either verbally or nonverbally and that is consent. We should emphasize that instead of going for the baseline of a barely "yes" or a go along to get along type of response, that we want our partners to clearly want it as much as we do. Then the sex will be consensual and more hot.

70

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



PNM

paul.morton0@gmail.com unless of course both parties are drunk off there asses flirt it up end up having sex, and in the morning 1 if not both realizes oh, shit! i just got raped last night, because i was menatally incapacitated by alcahol, and that girl should have pointed out how drunk i was.

2

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 1 month ago



Blackball ed

TheFratTrap "You're not mad at the guy and don't want him to get in trouble." One of the issues with rape legislation being taken seriously is you girls say shit like this. No one is going to take you seriously if you even consider pulling the rape card over some petty jealousy shit. Fuck off, and let the actual rape victims be taken seriously, because they should be afforded the opportunity to go before a jury without the burden of having to prove that it isn't a bullshit publicity stunt.

-8

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



G-Sig

GammaPhinest1874 I think the cause of this situation is girls not being very self aware and not realizing how uncomfortable they are until it's "too late". It's certainly a lesson to be learned, about not jumping into some what risky situations.

-83



^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Yonce Why is the onus only on the woman? Sex is a two part responsibility. It is the responsibility of the advancer (man or woman) to ASK for consent and not make assumptions. Once asked, it is the responsibility of the other person to give consent or not give consent.

60

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



ariasummers It's not anybody's job to ask first. If someone says, "Here have some water." And you take it and drink it, did that person force you to drink the water because they didn't ask if you wanted it? No. If you had said, "No I don't want the water," and then the other person poured it down your throat, then they forced you to drink it.

36

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



chavala As someone who has been sexually assaulted, I can openly say that you are wrong. What you have said is the same as when people say that a girl shouldn't have been drinking if she didn't want to get raped. Stop blaming the victim.

13

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



johnnyd So, what you're saying is that a girl can be drunk and not be held responsible for her poor decision making under the influence of alcohol, but that if a man drinks he is totally liable for every decision he makes under the same influence of alcohol? Gotcha. You are basically saying women are helpless and cannot make decisions on their own. The bottom line is that if alcohol is a factor in these cases, neither party is responsible, or both parties are responsible. Equally. No one is victim blaming. But if a woman is drunk and she doesn't want to take responsibility for actions or decisions made while drunk, then she is not responsible enough to drink. Period. Same goes for men.

61

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



secondwife Being drunk can make you unable to help yourself in a situation where you can get taken advantage of, but it's not an excuse to force yourself on someone who can't help themselves. Making excuses for people who do so is equally abhorrent.

-2

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 3 months ago



Titan284 The bias here is incredible.

-5

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New Member

marymalcolm Reading through this made my stomach twist. First off, I'm so sorry you went through this. All of you. Anyone who has gone through this. Blanket I'm sorry here. Second, this was not a case of rape-ish' behavior, this was rape. With that being said, I'm not saying all rape should be treated equally. This guy doesn't deserve to spend the next ten years of his life locked away in prison. He doesn't deserve being branded a sexual predator for life. He does deserve to know that what he did was wholly unacceptable. Consent is not always actually saying the word 'no.' If a girl is lying there, not moving, not making eye-contact, she's telling him no. He treated sex with her as if she were a hole in the wall and that's definitely not sex, that's rape.

5

What makes me so sad is that there's a big chance he was never told how unacceptable and awful this was. So that means there is a big chance it will happen again. Maybe not between them, but definitely with someone else. You ask what should be done about something like this, it should be talked about. The guy needs to be told what happened wasn't right. Other people need to be told this behavior isn't right. Until we all decide that this is definitely not right, it will keep happening. What sucks is I think we've all decided it, but we might still be afraid to actually say the words. I'm so glad you spoke out on here because it started a dialogue, but the next step and probably the most important is that he HAS to be made aware of what consent is and what it isn't. Rape is sex without consent. This WAS rape.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

Andree Huge disagree. Rape is a felony crime punishable by prison time. 68

You cannot change the definition of a criminal offense like that. It trivializes the experience of those subjected to real rape, which is a violent crime. This was an incident of miscommunication, maybe coercion. Repugnant, bad behavior on his part; a learning experience for her. But it was not a crime.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New Member

chavala The technical definition of rape is sex without consent. It -2

is a crime because of the lack of consent. It doesn't need to be violent. Your comment marginalizes what happened to this girl. Technically, it is rape. It was not consensual. Does he deserve jail time? No. Does he deserve to be suspended from school or put on probation? Yes. In some states, the fact that she'd been drinking would mean that she isn't legally allowed to give consent, and it is labelled as rape under law.

As someone who took a year to realize a sexual encounter was actually sexual assault and possibly rape under new laws, I can say that this is how I viewed my experience until I talked to the office that helps to support victims of rape and sexual assault. Do not label this as a learning experience of poor judgment. There is only a grey area because people are terrified of labeling people that they know as rapists and the backlash that comes with it. What you say denies the experience of most women who have been raped.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

Andree Dictionary definition from the OED: "The unlawful 17  
compelling of a person through physical force or  
duress to have sexual intercourse."

The important part is the legal definition, however, because rape as a crime is a felony, with penalties including prison time, we can't just toss the term around casually. It's like redefining murder. You want a crime to be very strictly defined, to protect both accused and accuser.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New Member

knowyour9 While I agree with your general sentiment (not 0  
to misuse terms with both social and legal

significance), I feel compelled to make a slight alteration to your definition. Yes. That may be the definition of rape in whatever dictionary you used. The offense that can be legally prosecuted, however, is not only forced sexual encounters (rape), but any act that falls under sexual assault. Sexual assault, according to the Department of Justice, is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the EXPLICIT CONSENT of the recipient. Falling under the definition of sexual assault are sexual activities as forced sexual intercourse, forcible sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling, and attempted rape.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 5 months ago



paul.morton0@gmail.com did he the accused rapist, actually 1  
verbally consent either, if going  
by what you are saying then both raped each other, being a  
mutual agreement to have sexual intercourse then it is no  
longer rape, but a bad desision.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 1 month ago



New  
Member

TigerClaws No where does the author state "Matt" applied pressure, 25  
physically forced her to have sex or had sex with her while  
she was incapacitated. No where did she say she withdrew the non-  
verbal consent she gave him.

What I am about to say will be unpopular, but it is the truth. If a woman is  
incapable of saying no except under threat of physical harm, then she is  
mentally a child. And these women do a great deal of harm to adult  
women who seek gender equality. They spread the message that women  
are incapable of being an adult and expressing what they want or don't  
want.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New  
Member

knowyour9 There are two things I'd like to respond to in this post. 1  
One, she did mention the fact that, although she never  
actually said the word "no," her body language was not that of  
someone giving consent. "I stared at the ceiling the whole time,  
occasionally flashing him the fake smile reserved for people you  
accidentally make eye contact with in the grocery store. I don't  
think I moved the entire time, and I didn't care if he noticed."

Second, the idea that someone who is incapable of saying not  
except under extreme duress is somehow childlike is misguided to  
say the least. There is extensive sociological and psychological  
research that actually shows quite the opposite. Although  
scientists these days disagree about the degree to which biology  
affects sex roles, everyone agrees that cultural attitudes,  
metaphors, discourse, and beliefs exert an immense influence on  
how people view themselves, their relationships, and their  
sexuality. Overwhelming support exists that substantiates the  
social theory that women learn to belittle or ignore their own  
judgment, especially when it opposes with that of another. Women  
learn far more than men the significance of pleasing others,  
concentrating on the needs of others even to their own detriment,  
not hurting or embarrassing others, avoiding conflict, and not  
"making a scene" or embarrassing themselves.

All this socialization systematically affects how women act and  
react in situations that can result in sexual assault. Women who  
have experienced a sexual assault often reported a fear of conflict  
or social embarrassment prevented them from acting decisively  
after they had said no and were ignored. When contemplating  
their attack after the fact, many women even report that they  
simply ignored their initial sense of discomfort or danger, and as a  
result may have missed a chance to fight back or escape, all of  
which we can see in this anecdote.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 5 months ago



New  
Member

Titan284 If one thinks themself the victim, he or she will be a victim. It's 2  
painful reading the subconscious insecurities of many manifest  
thorough the words here

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



paul.morton0@gmail.com hey, before you go pulling the she didn't -1  
consent, you should realize that neither of  
them did. secondly, they were both drunk and didn't have clear heads,



PNM again neither of them had the ability to make proper decisions.  
Was this rape, or a sloppy boy, and girl who got mixed signals because they were drunk, wait the girl flirts up till sex starts. then in her head changes her mind, expecting a drunk off his ass boy to notice during sex.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 1 month ago



New Member

marymalcolm Sorry, that should read "lack of" consent is not always actually saying the word 'no.' Fast fingers, slow brain.

-6

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Blackballed

Capitalist\_Gentleman It is whatever the campus feminazi group tells you it is.  
They want you to question any type of male contact

because they can't get the kind of guys you can. All those workshops and flyers slowly create doubt in your mind. The feminazis are angry and depressed inside and maybe they feel that if they can make you feel like them their anger will go away.

-66

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

Red Wine and Blue Another issue that's happened to me is the new definition of "No". I feel like guys think when I say a blatant no it's just me being coy, not a denying of consent. I've had guys that I've had to repeat no to too many times before (if I can) getting up and leaving wherever we are, which I really don't think should happen. No means no the first time.

171

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Staff

hot piece of TSM I agree! And I considered having this piece include that, but I think it was just too much to force into one column. I might write another at some point about playing hard to get and the double standard, the feeling we're not allowed to want it outright, kind of leads to guys not believing you when you say no.

99

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

BeautyandtheBar When I tell a guy "no" in bed, that doesn't mean "try harder" or that I'm playing hard to get. Girls might play those games over text, but I think I can speak for a large majority of women when I say that we aren't playing those games in bed.

80

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Little

DoesntMatter1111 I've had multiple women say "no" when we'd be making out and I'd make a move or something similar, and they would sound serious about it. I always back off after that, it's how I was raised. However, in half these situations, after I would stop and suggest something else to do, or even immediately after I backed off sometimes, the woman would say something like "oh, I actually wanted you to keep going" and a couple actually left because they were like "you should have known I wanted you to keep going" telling me I need to be more manly or dominant or some crap. And this is not a one time thing, I can guarantee other guys have had multiple women do this stuff to. So, yes, a decent amount of women ARE in fact playing these games in bed. I've been with women who actually had rape fantasies, it's ridiculous. I'm going to continue backing off when I hear "no" because I don't want a false rape charge ever, but please don't be naive about this.

62

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New Member

knowyour9 This idea of masculinity is interesting, and I respect you for continuing to stop when a woman tells you no. (Although just to clarify, statistically speaking only 2% of reported rapes are thought to be false, and only about 5% of rapes are ever reported. This leaves your chances of incurring a "false rape" charge at around .0001%.)

2

I think this speaks a lot to the male perspective on the issue of sexual assault. While I believe you are sincere in your account of experiences with women (and their perception of what it means to be a "man"), it is important to remember two things:

1. That your sexuality, man or woman, is up to you to define. People often forget that men too experience the social pressures to conform to a certain image or conception of masculinity. If that image, in your experience, does not align with what is ethical (and LEGAL), then alter your behavior. Other people will follow - this is the nature of social change within any given society. In this way men too can help to eliminate unwanted sexual encounters.

2. That while I respect the fact that you have been put in situations that seem to promote this idea that women want to be violated, want a "real" man, this conception of sexuality is not only misguided, but dangerous. It promotes the myths surrounding rape and sexual assault that make it so difficult to address. For example, if an accused rapist says that he thought the woman had consented, he may have believed that consent is implied when a woman dresses in certain ways, drinks, goes to a man's room, shows that she likes the man, allows him to pay for her dinner, is affectionate, is sexual in any way or is known to have been sexual in the past. Such notions have some cultural currency, and many men have been educated to embrace these prevalent myths of consent as fact. Even if an aggressor realizes on some level that a woman did not consent, he may still believe that the "politically correct" version of consent is not really important for good sex. It is often taken for granted, accepted as common knowledge, that it is the man's role to be dominant, that women's objections should be ignored, and that knowing that "no" really means "yes" is all "part of the game." Such socialization cannot forgive the violation of women, of course. The point is only that one must take it into consideration to truly understand, for example, how a man can assault a woman while at the same time believing that he did nothing wrong.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 5 months ago



New Member

23thirty That is definitely bordering on rape territory and, in my opinion, that dialogue should most definitely include guys. Whenever you hear a "no" that's it, stop.

36

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

DJDuds I feel like what you should be campaigning for here is for girls to know that they can have courage under any circumstances. To know that no matter what's already happened or what position they find themselves in, they can always say no. Most of us guys out here wouldn't want to have sex with you if we knew it wasn't going to be enjoyable for you as well.

113

But if you go through the entire process: flirting, going to his room, having a heart-to-heart, making out with him, getting in bed, and then having sex with him, all without EVER saying you are uncomfortable or telling him to stop, then that IS consensual.

I agree that this story plays out frequently, and I hate that it does, but it's not a rape grey area. It's not rape at all. If something's happening that you want to stop, then you have to say something. Men, believe it or not, cannot read your mind. How was Matt supposed to know you didn't want to go through with this?

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Staff

hot piece of TSM No ones blaming Matt here. That's the point. I'm not even saying, in my case, it was a fear thing. I do not blame him at all. And that's the whole point. Not that it was a gray area. This IS different from rape. But women find themselves in situations where they have sex when they don't want to. And maybe it's because they're being a people pleaser or don't want to be called a prude or whatever. The point is, sometimes we ALL do things

101

we don't want to do, it's just weird when it happens with sex. THIS experience is hardly spoken about.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



elly89 You called it rape ish which would mean rape like and that's the farthest thing from the truth. It was consensual with regret for not saying no. 19

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New Member

2fratty2fail So the grey area, where you don't think he is to blame but you do feel violated, isn't that like accidental manslaughter? I'd call this nonconsensual, noncriminal sex (or something way more eloquent). Also I agree with the intent of your column; we need to create a more expansive vocabulary for sexual encounters. The confused feeling you have, as you alluded to, is because the nature of situations like these are rarely verbalized. If we can come up with a definition for this, we can better discuss it. Also on the verbal yes: by the letter of the law in most states, a verbal yes is necessary to establish consent. However, to expect this of everyone in every situation, is terribly naive and actually counterproductive. If you hold people to this standard, rather than a more reasonable one, we will continue to miss the mark. Rape is one of those things where you know it when you see it. It's tough to vocalize, but by insisting on ridiculous standards, you further confuse things for the laymen and women. This is the same problem with saying that any drunk sex is nonconsensual. Doing so sets such ridiculous standards that it is actually counter productive. Unfortunately, most of our vocabulary about sex is either legal in nature (rape, sexual assault, etc.) or too ambiguous (hook up, etc.). Thank you for writing this column, Hot Piece. By continuing this dialogue, you're getting people to think about this issue more deeply and helping people to vocalize their own experiences. If we keep doing this, eventually we may be able to define these sorts of interactions and give women and men guidance on how to handle them.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

pirates\_and\_pearls You're right, it's definitely not Matt's fault, and it's definitely not rape, but the author is in no way claiming that it is. I think what she's saying is that a lot of times we feel like we can't say no because we'll be considered a "tease." It's happened to me before as well, and I obviously know that I was not a victim of rape. I think that girls regretting having sex and crying rape after the fact is a serious issue, and it is one that has been previously addressed on this site. But this is a different issue entirely. It's just super uncomfortable because even though these guys aren't forcing themselves on us at all, we don't feel as if we can speak up because we feel some fucked up responsibility to have sex with them after doing other things with them. I recently had an encounter where a guy tried to get me to do certain things with him, and my response was "I don't feel comfortable doing that since we just met, I'm really sorry." But sorry for what? Why do we feel the need to apologize for not wanting to give a guy a blow job or have sex? People are so caught up with ending the use of words like "bitch" and "bossy", but I think we should stop referring women to teases. I think that word does more damage because it's what's leading to these feelings of pressure to do things we're uncomfortable with. 74

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Little

BratTurnedSrat As a survivor of rape, thank you for saying that. Matt couldn't read her mind, so unless she made some sort of indication that she didn't want sex, it's not anywhere near being in a "gray area." 49

I understand that we might have sex that we didn't want necessarily. The problem is that we need to express our opinions rather than stay silent. In a perfect world, it would be simple and understood. However, it's not perfect.

Rape is not a color scale issue - you either are or you aren't. It's not a fun feeling to experience sex you didn't want, but it's up to us to try and change this by expressing our feelings upfront.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

Yonce What you are saying above is a rape myth. Flirting does not mean consent to have sex. Making out does not mean consent to have sex. Heck, even getting in bed does not mean consent to have sex. Someone could just want to make out for the sake of making out. Or get in bed just to cuddle. And guess what? It's really easy to find out if someone wants to have sex. All you have to do is ask. If they say yes, there's your consent. If they are silent, that is not consent. If they look away, that is not consent. If they say no, that is obviously not consent.

45

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New Member

Geaux\_Nola The problem is that you're putting the onus of asking on the guy. You are right in saying that flirting, making out, getting in bed, etc. is not consent. But, if you don't give any indication that this isn't what you want, it's kind of hard for a guy to know what you are thinking. From my female friends, asking girls if they want to have sex as opposed to intuitively making a move is seen as a turn off.

1

In a perfect world we would all know what someone else is thinking but as someone else pointed out, there's not lawyers with consent forms ready to pop up whenever two people are getting intimate.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

Yonce Asking isn't the onus of the guy. It's the responsibility of the person (guy or woman) who wants to escalate the situation. There are times my guy hasn't wanted to have sex because he was stressed, tired, etc. If I hadn't asked him, I wouldn't have known. Asking is the only way to know what someone wants since, as you pointed out, we can't read each other's minds. Instead of pushing, pushing, pushing until someone says (or indicates) "no" or gives in, we should approach sex as: I want to have sex. And I really want my partner to have sex without feeling like I'm pressuring them in any way. So I'm going to ask instead of pushing until they say "no." In the end, I'd rather be safe than sorry by asking. And asking CAN be sexy. I think it's a total turn-on when my guy asks me. If you still think that asking is un-sexy, it's not as un-sexy (or rapey) as just assuming that the other person wants the same thing as you do and then pushing them too far.

15

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

DeltaBelle This hurts my heart to hear women honestly say this. As a woman, we have the right to say stop at any point. No one has control over our body's but us. If a women never says "Yes, let's have sex" that is by law rape. And even if you never want to cry wolf, you still feel the shame and violation. The worst thing you can ever say is "you should have said no." Matt could have easily said, "Are you okay with this?" Rape is NEVER the victim's fault.

24

Hypothetically, a woman was fine just kissing a man and passed out. She awakes the next morning naked and hurting from having non-consensual sex while she was asleep. But by your definition, that isn't rape?

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

ariasummers This is a myth. If a women says 'No,' it is rape. There have been times when I never said yes because they didn't ask me, but it doesn't matter, because they didn't force me.

12

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

elly89 Not by law rape at all! Rape is non consensual unless the woman says no or indicates a lack of consent then how is it rape? I was having sex with someone I wanted to but he wanted anal. Me telling him no and him still shoving it in was rape! Consensual turn non quick! If you lay there and accept our even help him get you undressed as well as him

-4

how is he to know got don't want to unless you learn to open up your mouth and use your voice to say the words!

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New Member

madeforcommenting It's obviously not consent, because she didn't consent to it. She didn't want it. She didn't ask for it and he never asked if she wanted it. He assumed. You're completely right – MEN CAN'T READ YOUR MIND. Or anyone. No one can read your mind. People have to buck up and realize this and fucking ASK before having sex with anyone. She, possibly too intoxicated to make proper decisions or possibly too pressured, didn't speak up. But, he never asked. They were not in a relationship, they did not know each other's sexual lives very well – he had no business making THAT assumption. It IS a rapey grey area.

I'm of the mindset that this entire encounter needs to change. This idea of ENTHUSIASTIC consent needs to be spread around campuses, not just this idea of "I can keep going until she says 'no', and if she doesn't say anything, no matter the clues I'm getting from her, yay me!"

If someone was staring at the ceiling and I was trying to have sex with them, I'd stop. There are some serious nonverbal cues here.

I have a boyfriend. I love flirting with him, making out with him, touching him. But he always – every single time – asks me before we take it a step further. A little, "This okay?" with a subsequent "Yes" from me never ruins the mood and makes sure that everyone's on board with what's about to happen. THAT is consensual sex. Having a drunk girl in your bed that you are kissing and then going for the condom, not a peep from her, is not consensual.

Because, if he would have asked, she would have said no. By not asking, a drunk girl that already feels pressure from society and everyone to 'put out' and feels as though she was asking for it the whole time and can't say no, won't say no.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Big

elly89 He was drunk as well. Why is it his job to gain consent? Why don't more women learn to use there voices and/or act?

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New Member

prettykitty Have you read nothing on this page? It is the responsibility of the individual (boy or girl or whoever) who wants to take things further to ask for consent. In this case, Matt wanted to take things further and was the one who initiated it so it was HIS responsibility to get consent.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 5 months ago



Big

5OClockShadow Based solely on this column and not on experiences others may have had –if you're having an internal conflict, take the safe route and tell us no.

Maybe = no. From reading this I can tell it's not as easy as it sounds, but you have to. After a night of flirting, going back to someone's place, & making out, how am I supposed to know that you feel different than the signals I've gotten if you don't tell me? I certainly don't want to take advantage of anyone, and it's unfair to call a guy a rapist or a "rape-ish-ist" if he has no idea where you're drawing the line. I felt the need to say something because your lack of communication can affect a guy who has no intention of wrongdoing.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago




Big

Yonce How come the sole responsibility is on the woman to say "no." Partners should ASK each other. Consent to one act does not mean consent to another. Kissing means consent to kissing. Getting in bed means consent to getting in bed. If you want to escalate the situation and have sex, then simply ask. That takes the guesswork out of things. Btw, both partners should do this, not necessarily just the man to the woman. There have been times when my guy was just too tired or stressed out to have sex, but would've just gone along with it had I not asked him. I asked him, he said no, and the problem was solved quite easily.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



 5OClockShadow That would be ideal if most sex occurred in negotiated contract form. Unfortunately, most sex occurs in the heat of the moment. At that point, whose responsibility is it to step forward and ask? Do we automatically assume it's the man's responsibility? Is that fair? Especially in a "I kinda want to but I kinda don't" situation? It's more realistic for the hesitant party to just say, "No," and the other party respect their request.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Yonce I pointed out in my response that BOTH partners should do -1 this, not just the man, and that I have asked my guy before.

Big

Whoever wants to escalate the situation should be the one to ask. Asking doesn't have to be an awkward negotiation. It's a quick exchange that takes 5 seconds and can even enhance the sexiness of the situation. Instead of approaching sex as "I'll just push and push and push until my partner indicates 'no' or gives in," we should approach sex as "I really want to have sex. And I also really want my partner to want to have sex without feeling pressured. They may not want to make the situation awkward by saying 'no,' so I'm going to ask them what they want."

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



ariasummers That's not how sex happens. Maybe for some 22 people, but in the heat of the moment, most

Big

people don't just stop and ask. If one person isn't feeling the heat, it is their responsibility to take a step back. If a person doesn't protest, it wasn't rape because it wasn't forced. I'm sorry if you've been through something where you're not sure it was rape, or maybe you know it wasn't rape but still feel bad about it. That sucks. But there is a reality to this situation. It is both partners responsibility to be straightforward, no matter who initiates it. Communication is key on both ends.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



madeforcommenting Why don't you have to ask? Why are you assuming that we 2 want sex?

New Member

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Andree Because nonverbal cues are a reality. Did you read his post? All 18 the signals had been for yes, and then she regretted it. Women have to be clear that they are signaling, even if they aren't verbalizing.

Big

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



LittleLiney Basically the story of how I lost my virginity. Thank you so much for writing this I 62 cried myself to sleep and hated myself for weeks, knowing I had no one to blame but myself and that's a really shitty feeling. It's nice to hear that someone out there understands the gray space.

Big

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Adrienne Thanks for posting this. I felt the same about the time I lost my virginity. I 0 watched a movie with this cute, nice, and rather oblivious guy at a common area at hostel, which then (to my surprise, frankly) led to some kissing, and some clothes came off. It was really dark, I had fooled around like that before without sex, so I was in mental shock when I realized he was about to have sex with me, with zero communication. (It was so dark that to this day, I'm not even sure if he used a condom.)

PNM

It happened so fast, I could hardly process, but I made a choice in that moment that it was okay. I consented, by not saying no. If he had asked me, it would not have happened, but when it was happening anyway, I didn't have the confidence to stop him.

It was unequivocally not rape, or even "rape-ish". (A terrible term.) But it was an unwanted, physically painful, and confusing experience.

So, yes. Giving consent and wanting sex are two different things. I think it's a cultural problem that goes both ways. Men need to ask, but women have to communicate assertively, too. We can't have it both ways - be the submissive, silent female, and also get to play around sexually in exactly all the ways we want. Fundamentally, this issue is a lack of communication.

Lack of communication can't be confused with rape. I fear such confusion can only make the legal waters much rougher for sexual assault victims.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



prettykitty Him just assuming that you would want to have sex with him -2  
without asking and barely knowing you is pretty "rape-ish"

New

Member

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 5 months ago



Big

CurlyQPrincess And suddenly I feel at peace... I feel bad for saying that but it's oddly liberating to know that I'm not alone in the universe here.. We must stick together ladies!

49

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New

Member

Serena Thank you for writing this. 3 years ago I experienced the same thing and to this day I still wonder how I could have done that. I don't ponder over my past as much but this has always bothered me. I know there's not a name or label for this kind of action but it comforts me knowing that I'm not alone in this. Thank you xx

35

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Little

kk\_16 I feel that there is a grey area. I've been in a situation where my guy friend, who had tried to take me home many times and repeatedly received the "I won't hook up with you" response, took advantage of me. We ran into each other at a bar and he walked me home, because I lived close. We decided to stop at his place for awhile, me reminding him that sex wasn't going to happen. One thing lead to another and before I knew what was going on, he was inside of me through his boxers. I had no idea we were even close to a point where I would have to remind him no for the millionth time. There is a grey area. It's the area where a guy has been continuously aware of your standing and ignores it. Its where he takes advantage of a situation while he has the upper hand. He had been told no, but because you were into him, he ignored it.

23

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Little

biggiesmall988 If you were not conscious enough to know what was going on or going in and out of consciousness that is rape because it is not consensual.

24

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Little

kk\_16 Thank you for your concern but I was NOT drunk, I was sober. I was extremely tired but I was sober. He was on top of me and we had clothes on, he somehow managed to move both our undergarments aside while I was kissing him and plunged into me. Please don't try to act like that's ok.

20

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



PNM

paul.morton0@gmail.com biggiesmall988, is it rape if both parties are drunk(as said in article?) or is it that it is both parties raped each other? this is not about consciousness this is about her trying to stick her indescivness on the the other party.

1

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 1 month ago



Little

biggiesmall988 The scenario that is described in the above article is not rape it is the author caring more about not wanting to "seem like a tease" or disappointing the guy then she is her own self worth and what she wants.

11

There's nothing wrong with respecting yourself and saying no to sex if you do not want it and you should not care about it being "just easier to do it than to have the argument about not doing it". Women should not feel as though it is their role to have sex with a guy just because they are hanging out it's not women's role to do anything they don't want to do. The above scenario is definitely a issue that needs to be talked about but it should not be called rape at all because it invalidates situations of rape and victims who want to speak out against their rapist with using phrases like "why risk being wrongfully tagged as "the girl who cried rape". Instead the issue should have been an article about how women should know that they should be able to confidently say no to sex because they should not feel an obligation to do things that they do not want to do.

To the author: I know that you probably did not write this article with thoughts to offend women or rape victims but you are in a position to write articles for a website that gets a lot of attention and I wouldn't feel right not letting you know how your words could possibly affect others.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Staff

hot piece of TSM Hi. I agree it's not rape and didn't try to associate it with 33 rape. BUT. The phrase "I didn't want to have sex with him, but I still did" associates it with rape on its own. My whole point was that there ISN'T an actual word for THIS experience, and women who've had it don't want to call it any of those things, but we're not even acknowledging that this type of thing happens. We can't discuss the solution until we acknowledge that there is a problem. And I do think it's a situation of society is to blame, not the individuals.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Little

er07eu The focus of this article is troubling. Why do you find it so 47 important to re-name the neglect of ownership of an individual's decisions? To re-name the insecurity and perceived inability to communicate? Do you really believe the conversation should be about putting a new name on doing sexual things you don't want to do, and calling that thing rape-ish (to use your horrific and offensive vocabulary)? Or do you think the conversation should be about empowering women - hell, empowering human beings - to take responsibility for their decisions? To speak out for their preferences and to feel good about doing so?

Don't get me wrong, I've been there. I've been sexually assaulted - coerced into committing acts I initially tried to physically and vocally refuse. This left me feeling broken and ashamed, and the onus for this situation is on the person who coerced me. There is no ish about it. I've also had consensual sex that I did not want. The other person and I flirted and kissed and then had sex. The next day I felt like shit about it, and wished I had said no. I allowed a situation that I did not feel right about to take place, and that onus was on me. There is no ish about it.

So, to validate the "I'm not alone!" posts... No, you're not alone out there, Shitty Decision Maker - I can stand right alongside you. Us humans are ALL pretty good at making poor decisions now and then. Rest assured, we have our reasons for doing so. But why? It's important to figure out YOUR reasons. Me? I'm a people-pleaser. And no, this has nothing to do with society's portrayal of women or my upbringing - my sister is pleasantly much more selfish. I simply feel best when I've helped others to feel good. I now know this about myself, and no longer do this to my own detriment. I have begun creating boundaries to ensure my happiness stays intact. I take ownership for who I am as an adult woman.

The next time I was with a close guy friend, a few drinks in, wanting to get my makeout and cuddle on before passing out next to him in bed... guess what I did? Communicated that to him.

And because I am not friends with assholes or imbeciles, I did not EXPECT him to shame me or call me names. I did expect that he may be let down because he would not get what he may like, but that's his fuckin' cross to bear.

That concerned me in this article... all the talk of how you THOUGHT things would play out. Your assumptions that you and Matt would have a tug-o-war over whether or not to have sex speaks volumes of your relationship with him. You EXPECT your so-called friend to give you shit about not wanting to fuck him? You wanna check your friendships; that's a big issue that needs tending to. And not for one second does Matt come outta this NOT looking like a bad guy. But I'll make a comment about that later.

The reason I originally chose to comment was because of your comment here in this thread... which totally goes against everything you have suggested in this article. For you to say you didn't associate your situation to rape is offensive to my intelligence as a reader. Your article has 'rape' in the title. You absolutely use two opposing points - consensual sex and rape - to draw a middle line. To do this requires comparison to the concepts on either end, and finding compatibilities and differences to land you somewhere in the middle. If you weren't comparing this to rape, why did you bring up rape? You flat-out called this "rape-ish," but I am now supposed to accept your attempt to retract the comparisons to rape? I would like to think you believe you are speaking to other intelligent people out there, so please continue to speak with that in mind.

You further comment that you making the statement "I didn't want to have sex, but I still did" automatically leads others to associate it with rape. Girl, you really gotta stop projecting your beliefs and expectations as others' reality. You did it with Matt, and you're doing it with me as a reader. I don't think people going through with shit they do not want to go through with compares to rape. I think people doing things they don't want to - without communication - compares to poor decision making.

@Yonce tried to clear this up by putting the responsibility on only one person in a relationship in advocating that the person advancing the situation needs to ask permission to advance... Are you living in a vacuum? We need to wake up to our responsibilities and take ownership for the things we do, and don't, participate in. Where a relationship between two human beings is concerned, there is EQUAL responsibility on both parties. Inaction is just as much of a choice as action. To use more loaded language: inaction is just as much consent as is action in this case.

Hot Piece, I believe you created just as much of a SAFE SPACE as Matt created. You and Matt were two able, willing adults who mutually arrived at the same point in time. Physical contact is either welcome or unwelcome, there is a yes or a no. You welcomed all physical advances prior to sex, without conversation. Of course, talking doesn't mean cuddling is desired, cuddling doesn't mean kissing is desired, and kissing sure as shit doesn't mean sex is desired. But Matt got beyond talking, cuddling and then kissing... all without express consent. Which, from the way the article reads, you were okay with.

So, Hot Piece... you wanted a different dynamic then the one you were both leading toward, within the safe space you both created? That's on you, girl. You want shit to change? Try to change it. It's not a revolutionary concept. It won't help you in any meaningful way to focus on how you didn't ask for what you wanted and thus were wronged in the process. You need not

acknowledge the existence of a situation that is nowhere near to rape as something "rape-ish" to stop subjecting yourself to it in the future. You need not victimize yourself with statements such as "I didn't feel I'd been violated, though part of me knew I had." Which, by the way, leaves Matt standing in some pretty fuckin' negative light. If you felt positively about him, you were unsuccessful in your communication of that point.

I'm not trying to take away from how you felt like shit after making those decisions. But for you, me, and others to stop subjecting ourselves to situations like this in the future, I think we need to acknowledge the more meaningful undertone of this article: I made a decision regarding sex that is in opposition to how I wish to lead my life. Why did I do that? How can I face my fears and perceptions in order to live a more authentic, and still sexually-pleasing, life?

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



elly89 Wonderful response!

5

Big

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Yonce Under some state law definitions, this would be rape. In these definitions, the person who is advancing the sexual relations must ASK their partner for consent and receive consent before proceeding from one physical/sexual act to another. I'm not going to tell you how you should label or not label your experience. I'm just saying that, under some definitions, it could be identified as rape. What's perhaps more important than the nitty gritty of legal definitions of rape is how we talk about sex, consent, and responsibility and how we approach it in real life. It seems like a lot of the commenters are saying "this scenario is definitely not rape, the woman should have indicated that she didn't want to have sex." To them I ask: why is it just the woman's responsibility to say no? Why isn't it the man's responsibility to ask their partner if she wants to have sex? (Btw, this could also be vice versa when it comes to gender. It's just that in the scenario in the article, the man was the one making the advances.) Instead of approaching sexual relations in a way where the advancer keeps on physically pushing their partner until they say no or give in, we should approach sex as a platform of respect and mutual ENTHUSIASTIC consent where each partner makes sure that the other is both comfortable and happy to go to the next level (whether that's from dancing to kissing or kissing to cuddling or cuddling to sex). Affirmative, enthusiastic consent clears up any gray areas and makes the sex hotter because you know that both people are really into it.

7

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Andree You are advancing a very scary definition of rape here. How is consent to be proven in a court of law? We have to remember that rape is a felony crime that carries a prison sentence and potentially a lifetime sexual-offender label. We cannot throw that term around lightly. Use all sort of terms to villify "gray-area" situations, but please be careful with that word!

1

Big

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



elly89 Yes there is its called regret

3

Big

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



johnnyd There is a word for it. "Irresponsible". You chose to drink for 13 hours and you put yourself in a situation that you regret. You both were drunk. Live and learn. Btw, there is no such thing as 'rape-ish'. It either is or it isn't. You are watering down the

-2

Big



term because you cannot accept responsibility for your actions while drinking.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



elly89 And it's the individual not society stop caring about what society thinks about your possible bad decision to have a one night stand and you won't have to regret it! -12

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



DeltaBelle I know it's easy to tell a random stranger that what the experienced wasn't raped, but if your sister, best friend, or future daughter told you this story, could you tell her that she wasn't taken advantage of? Could you tell them "I know you didn't want to seem like a tease, but you really should have said something." 16

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Titan284 Yes I could. Because it's morally wrong to alter a situation and subject someone to a warped situation that feeds into their own fears.. Subconsciously putting them in a vicious cycle 9

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



QueenV Not saying "yes, let's have sex" is not rape! Consent can be given non-verbally. Consent for one thing (kissing) however does not constitute as consent for another (sex) and consent can ALWAYS be revoked at anytime! -6

Your hypothetical IS rape. But I don't see anywhere were anyone said it was...If you are unconscious, it's rape.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



DeltaBelle If you believe consent can be non-verbal, can the revoking of consent also be non-verbal? Personally, I would view a sexual partner just laying there praying for it to be over as somebody who really did not want to have sex. Many young men who have done this aren't rapist, but they are uneducated. If a guy would just ask, "Do you want to go any further?" I believe there would not be so many young women who are put in this position. -2

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



ariasummers Yes but non verbal revoking of consent is not as easily interpreted as non verbal consent. -9

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



elly89 Non verbal: move, stop, push the person! I'm a woman and this is ridiculous stop playing defenseless and grow some balls! 6

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



prettykitty This is rape this is not a grey area -5

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 5 months ago



Sororitygirlandmother My situation is slightly different but I don't feel it was rape or consensual. I had a couple drinks and ended up bringing a guy home with me. But I was blacked out and don't remember the entire night. Drunk me was probably ready for sex. But sober me wanted to wait until I got married. I didn't know anything happened that night. Next thing I know it's a month later and I missed my period. Now that I know what happened I feel violated. I don't want to call it rape cause I fully believe that my drunk state of mind wanted to have sex. He didn't know that if I was sober I 23

would have said no. But I didn't want it and now I have to live with what happened and the result of that night. I don't feel he deserves blame because he was just as drunk as I was. But it wasn't consensual either.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Blg

QueenV @sororitygirlandmother. First let me start by saying that if you don't feel it 9 was rape, then it's not. You know your body and the situation best, and therefor it's your call. BUT I do want other females to know that if you were blacked out that is defined as rape. If you or he is in a state were it's understood that the other is highly intoxicated then it constitutes as rape. Ladies, if you feel violated don't brush it off by saying you were drunk. Tell someone you trust, and talk it out.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



Blg

johnnyd If the man was drunk also, then the blame is equal.

3

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago



New Member

LibertyAndCompetition made an account just to comment here

20

As a brother, boyfriend, and a gentleman, this issue has had me conflicted with myself as a man, and a brother and alumni of my fraternity. I've seen women "cry-wolf" and often gotten angry, thinking how real a possibility it would be that this could sink myself, my brothers, or my fraternity as a whole. but i've also heard my sister, girlfriend, and female friends relate experiences where they felt they had sex unconsensually. This is probably the fairest article i've seen describing it. I'm sorry you and others who commented had to experience that, and i'm grateful that your level-headed enough to see him not as the villain. there is a middle ground between rape and consensual sex, and that's something both men and women need to realize.

^ This • Bless your heart • Reply • 6 months ago

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